

5 APR 1972

News International Ltd. Confirms Big Purchase In Beaverbrook Papers

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

LONDON — News International Ltd. confirmed it had purchased about 20% of the non-voting shares of Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., publisher of the daily and Sunday Express and The Evening Standard.

Rupert Murdoch, News International chairman, said the shares were bought over a period of several months. The transactions reportedly were made with the "knowledge and approval" of Sir Max Aitken, chairman of Beaverbrook.

News International publishes The Sun, a daily morning newspaper, and The News of the World, a Sunday paper.

Industry sources noted recurring reports that Beaverbrook might negotiate to merge with Associated Newspapers Ltd., which owns The Daily Mail and The Evening News.

These sources said the News International stock purchase would put it in a strong bargaining position if a merger creates a realignment among British newspapers.

It was suggested that News International particularly would like to gain control of The Evening Standard, the only national competitor to The Evening News in the afternoon daily field.